

have used a few years later, when all his heresies were full blown. The rulers of England, he says, ought to consider that they injure fcheir fathers in purgatory if they allow the money spent on masses for the dead to be sent to the Pope by way of taxation. The money ought either to be used for masses, or restored to the heirs of the donors, who would not then be defrauded. He cannot refrain from dragging into the question his proposals for disendowment. There may, he admits, be some danger that the Church of England will be corrupted by riches when the Papal collectors are no longer allowed to prey on her, but * it is clear that for this there remains the remedy that the goods of the Church be prudently distributed to the glory of God, putting aside the avarice of Prelates and Princes.' Such was Wycliffe's state-paper. A line at the end of the document records that * here silence was imposed on him by our Lord the King with the Council of the Kingdom on these questions.' But the fact that while under the ban of the Pope's bulls he should have been consulted at all, shows how popular his doctrines had become with the heads of the nation.¹

During all these months, in which the Bishops still delayed his prosecution, Wycliffe was busy defending himself. He issued two papers, each containing a scholastic defence of the nineteen heresies condemned by the bulls.² He also published anonymously* a general attack on the right of the Pope to condemn men at his pleasure; he argued that such condemnations might be erroneous, and that in case of error the edicts had no binding power. He appealed to political common sense against any other construction of the Papal authority. 'If it were agreed,' he wrote, 'that whenever the Pope or his vicar pretends to bind or loose, he really binds or looses, how does the world stand? For then if the Pope pretends that he binds by pains of eternal damnation whoever resists him in acquisition of goods moveable and immoveable, that man is so bound. And consequently it will be very easy for the Pope to acquire all the kingdoms of the world/⁴ Wycliffe had not yet declared for throwing off the authority of

¹ *Fasc. Z.* > 258-71.

² *Ibid.* 245-57; *Wals.*, i. 357-63.

» *Fasc. Z.* _t 481, note 1, < *Ibid.* 489.